Conference on Disarmament

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Final record of the one thousand two hundred and ninety-eighth plenary meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 27 August 2013, at 10.10 a.m.

President: Mr. Gerard Corr.....(Ireland)

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The President: I call to order the 1298th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

Before we start our official business, please allow me to warmly welcome the participants in the 2013 Programme on Fellowships on Disarmament, who will be following our meetings today and next week.

I would like to first make a few remarks. You will all, I hope, have received an advance copy of the draft annual report of the Conference, which was circulated in English by the secretariat on Thursday 22 August. The draft will be available in all United Nations languages at the latest on 29 August in accordance with rule 44 of the rules of procedure. I have prepared the draft report with the assistance of the Secretary-General in accordance with rules 44 and 45 of the rules of procedure. In deciding on its form and content, I was guided by the rules, as well as by the reports of previous years, and in particular by last year's report, as the most recent one to be agreed by the Conference. I hope that delegations will conclude that the draft reflects the requirement set out in rule 45 that the report shall be "factual and reflect the negotiations and work of the Conference".

As I noted at last Tuesday's plenary meeting, each successive President in 2013 has made significant efforts to achieve consensus on a programme of work. It is also of course the case that the Conference has not so far reached agreement on a programme of work, nor has it undertaken in 2013 the substantive work of negotiation which is its raison d'être. I hope that the draft report reflects fairly and appropriately both the intensive efforts undertaken and the lack of results to date.

As delegates will have seen, I have reflected in full the decision taken by the Conference to establish the informal working group, which held its first meeting yesterday afternoon, and I have left a place-holder for the work which will be undertaken by the group between now and the end of the 2013 session of the Conference. I will be in close contact with Ambassador Gallegos over the coming weeks to consider how best to reflect this work in the annual report.

I look forward to an exchange of general views on the draft report at today's plenary meeting.

As I mentioned at our last plenary meeting, and as also indicated by the secretariat when circulating the advance copy of the draft report, it would greatly facilitate our collective work to finalize the annual report if any comments or proposed amendments could be provided in writing to the secretariat by 3 p.m. on this coming Thursday 29 August, so the secretariat could circulate a compilation of all such comments and proposed amendments the following day, Friday 30 August.

The comments would be with attribution and circulation will be by e-mail; a hard copy will also be available for circulation in the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. The present draft will be available to all delegations in all official languages, as I stated, prior to the plenary next week.

On a final technical point, the draft takes into account the work of the Conference until 22 August 2013, which is the date when the draft was finalized and submitted for processing. The draft lists also the documents that had been issued by that date, and it goes without saying that the secretariat will fill in the blank spaces in the report relating to the numbers of meetings and will update the list of documents submitted after 22 August until the conclusion of the 2013 session. In this regard, please note that only documents submitted by 13 September 2013 will be issued as official documents of the Conference on Disarmament.

We shall now begin consideration of the report, and I first have on the list of inscribed speakers the Ambassador of Japan, Ambassador Yamamoto.

Mr. Yamamoto (Japan): I have asked for the floor to warmly welcome the participants in this year's United Nations Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament, who are here in the Council chamber this morning. Japan has been supporting this programme for many years, as disarmament and non-proliferation education is a significant component of our policy. In addition to raising awareness among the public in general, including the younger generation, Japan considers that this is applicable as well to diplomats and other government officials who devote themselves to carrying forward disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. It is remarkable to see many previous Fellows now assuming an active role in the disarmament arena. In fact, some of them are present in this chamber today.

Since 1983, we have invited the United Nations Fellows to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and so far 786 Fellows from various countries have visited these cities. We are pleased to be able to receive, once again, 25 Fellows this year. I hope that the two-month programme, which started this week, will be valuable to their career and that their visit will strengthen their resolve to achieve a world without nuclear weapons.

I would also like to express our gratitude to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs for its continuous efforts in running the fellowship programme, which is one of the most successful and long-standing projects of the United Nations. I assure you that Japan will remain supportive of this programme.

Finally, profiting from this occasion, I would like to remind all the Conference on Disarmament colleagues that Ambassador Amano is hosting a reception tonight at his residence to welcome these Fellows and also to bid you all farewell. We look forward to seeing you all there. Although tonight we have a cultural event hosted by the Chinese Mission, there is nothing diplomatic, so please come to both events.

The President: I thank the representative of Japan for his statement, and also join him in wishing the participants in the Fellowship Programme a very successful visit to Geneva. I now recognize the Ambassador of Austria.

Mr. Hajnoczi (Austria): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I have the honour to take the floor under your presidency, please allow me to commend you and your team for the great efforts that you have already put into your presidency and assure you of the full support of my delegation. We thank you for the first draft of the report that you have circulated. After a preliminary study, we are confident that under your able leadership we will complete this task in an effective manner.

We appreciate in particular the thoughtful paper that you have prepared on the challenges here. The Conference on Disarmament has been entrusted by the United Nations with the mandate to negotiate vitally important treaties in the area of disarmament. Taking one area as an example, we have been facing 16 years of stalemate in bringing about negotiations on nuclear disarmament. The existence of nuclear weapons continues to pose an inherent threat to the survival of humanity. The humanitarian imperative underlines the urgency for my country to get multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations started. The continued deadlock in the Conference is therefore of utmost concern to us.

We express our appreciation to Ambassador Ismail of Iraq for his tireless efforts during his presidency that resulted in the decision to establish the informal working group. We would also like to pay tribute to Secretary-General Tokayev for presenting the Conference with a range of pertinent proposals for revisiting its working methods. Our appreciation goes also to the preceding presidencies of Hungary, India, Indonesia and Iran for their committed efforts made towards overcoming the stalemate in the Conference.

We welcome the establishing of an informal working group to produce a programme of work, and hope that this group will fulfil its mandate and help to bring the Conference back on track to start the negotiations it was mandated for. We will benefit from the skilful leadership of Ambassador Gallegos of Ecuador and Ambassador Woolcott of Australia, as we already saw at the first meeting yesterday. The adoption of a programme of work would not be an objective in itself, but rather an important step towards the commencement of treaty negotiations.

Last year, a number of important initiatives were launched in the United Nations General Assembly aimed at overcoming the deadlock in multilateral disarmament negotiations. The open-ended working group in our view has provided a much-needed space for the United Nations membership, international organizations and civil society stakeholders to start building bridges and stake out commonality in the area of multilateral nuclear disarmament. We have seen that this joint effort by the General Assembly resulted in an interactive and substantial debate with a view to identifying common ground. The open-ended working group has thus made an important contribution to taking multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations forward.

Mr. President, you have offered the Conference a range of elaborate thoughts on the challenges that the Conference faces concerning its future direction. We concur with your analysis and would like to offer the following three observations.

The first is on the Conference's limited membership. The objective of the Conference is to negotiate and bring to a conclusion multilateral treaties. As pointed out in the President's informal paper, the rules of procedure require the Conference to review its membership at regular intervals. We consider it high time for such a review, which should be comprehensive. Proposals on how such a review could be conducted have already been offered, including the appointment of a special coordinator for the question of membership. I use the word "membership", and not "enlargement", as it is the view of my delegation that a multilateral negotiating forum that tackles issues of collective security that have an impact on all States should by definition provide the possibility for all States to be democratically represented in these negotiations.

The second is on the Conference's working methods. Is it lack of mutual trust or of political will that prevents the members of the Conference from overcoming the deadlock at a purely procedural level? Could a revision of working methods play a role in breaking this deadlock? My delegation believes that we need to pull all three strings together. In terms of working methods, the informal paper of the President offers starting points for flexible, elastic approaches that in our view merit further reflection by Conference members. A collective effort of revisiting how the consensus rule — which functions well, by the way, in other areas of the General Assembly's work — is being applied in the Conference seems essential to us. We could go even further and look into the issue of whether the rules of procedure need changes in order to facilitate taking decisions.

The third is on the lack of civil society participation in the Conference. Civil society has become a key partner for Governments in negotiating key multilateral disarmament and arms control treaties and, as such, a partner for success. Governments have recognized that collective security for the people can never be achieved without the involvement of the people. Exclusion leads to poor results when it comes to implementation. In an interconnected world, we all depend on each other. We should also be aware of the rich expertise and wealth of knowledge of civil society stakeholders that we are constantly missing out on, as we fail to reach out to them.

Opening the doors of the Conference to greater democracy would be an important ingredient in finally overcoming the impasse that we all bemoan. We look

forward to this important discussion being further deepened, and hope that this would result in concrete proposals for reform of the Conference's work.

The President: I thank the representative of Austria for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now recognize the Ambassador of Myanmar.

Mr. Wai (Myanmar): Mr. President, since my delegation is taking the floor for the first time under your presidency, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of this high, prestigious office. I am confident that under your able guidance and leadership the Conference on Disarmament will achieve progressive results. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation as you discharge your responsibilities in the presidency.

Allow me to take this opportunity to welcome the participants in the 2013 Disarmament Fellowship Programme who are here with us today and to express our sincere appreciation to you, Mr. President, for the Conference's draft annual report to the United Nations General Assembly. My delegation welcomes the draft report and sees it as a very good basis for an active discussion aimed at its finalization and adoption.

My delegation attaches great importance to the work of the Conference, which is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. We welcome every effort to move the Conference forward.

We very much welcome the recent establishment of the informal working group to produce a programme of work robust in substance and progressive over time in implementation. My delegation is pleased that the informal working group started its work yesterday. We hope that under the leadership of the President of the Conference on Disarmament as Chair, with Ambassador Luis Gallegos Chiriboga of Ecuador as Co-Chair and Ambassador Peter Woolcott of Australia as Vice-Co-Chair, the group would be able to end the prolonged stagnation of the Conference and enable it to start its substantive work in the near future.

In this light, I would like to thank the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, for his initiatives to revitalize the Conference, including the proposal to establish the informal working group. I would also like to express my appreciation to the Permanent Representative of Iraq and his team for being able to secure a consensus for the establishment of the group during his presidency.

To enable the informal working group to achieve a desirable outcome, it is our sincere hope that the rules of procedure, particularly the rule of consensus, would be respected throughout the group's work.

My delegation sincerely believes that, in order to produce a programme of work for moving the Conference forward, political will and flexibility on the part of all member States would be instrumental. We therefore strongly hope that all members of the Conference will henceforth show political will and flexibility in the Conference's work.

The President: I thank the representative of Myanmar for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now recognize the delegate from the Czech Republic, who will speak on behalf of the informal group of observer States to the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Míč (Czech Republic): Mr. President, as I am taking the floor for the first time under your presidency, I would like to congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and assure you of the support of my delegation and all observer States to the Conference. Today I have the honour to speak

on behalf of the informal group of observer States to the Conference, which represents 42 countries from every region of the world. All members of the informal group take an active part in the negotiation processes within the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, as they vote on each resolution, including the resolutions on the Conference, submitted every year. Therefore, I would like to share our views on the draft annual report which you distributed for consideration last Thursday.

In our view, the draft annual report is factual and well-balanced. You have managed, Mr. President, to offer a fair and realistic overview of the work of the Conference during its session in 2013, which reflects the current state of the Conference. I would like to commend you for this draft as well as for your informal paper elaborating on the challenges and future directions of the Conference. If you allow me, I would like to take this opportunity to refer to some of the issues put forward in your informal paper.

Our position has not changed over time. We are deeply concerned by the long deadlock in the Conference and by its inability to commence substantive work. We are also disappointed by the fact that sufficient time is not devoted to the process of revitalization of the Conference, particularly to the urgency of expanding the Conference. We therefore welcome your analysis and questions for consideration as stated in the aforementioned paper on these matters. Like all other members of the Conference, the members of the informal group respect the rules of procedure, and we believe that rule 2, which stipulates that the membership of the Conference will be reviewed at regular intervals, should be honoured on an equal footing with other rules. We reiterate our call for the appointment of a special coordinator who could initiate the necessary debate on the topic of enlargement. Observer States consider that the developments in the global security environment should be duly reflected in the appropriate representation of States in the Conference. We are also of the view that other working methods should be reviewed as well, in particular the length of the presidency or the use of the consensus rule in procedural matters as long as they lead to a substantive outcome.

On this occasion, I would like to commend Ambassador Ismail of Iraq and his team for the efforts they put into reaching consensus on the establishment of the informal working group on a programme of work.

The President: I thank the representative of the Czech Republic for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now recognize the Ambassador of Argentina.

Mr. D'Alotto (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): As I am taking the floor for the first time under your presidency, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and to assure you of my delegation's cooperation and support throughout your term. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to the Disarmament Programme Fellows here with us today and wish them success as they begin their work in the engaging field of disarmament. I also wish to commend the previous Presidents on their efforts, both bilaterally and multilaterally, to resume the substantive work of the Conference by formulating a programme of work that reflects the interests of all member States. I extend my thanks as well to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Tokayev, for his ideas and proposals regarding various aspects of the workings of the Conference, which were subsequently taken up by the delegations and generated a rich exchange of ideas.

On 16 August, the Conference took a significant step towards resuming its substantive work of negotiating multilateral instruments relating to disarmament, which is its core mandate. The adoption of document CD/1956/Rev.1, on the establishment of an informal working group to produce a programme of work robust

in substance and progressive over time in implementation, provides an opportunity which the members of the Conference must make good use of. We understand that this is an alternative route — it is a means and not an end — but we commend the Conference for its ability to take a decision that clearly shows its members' desire to get back to business.

Argentina wishes to reiterate its support for and commitment to this Conference. We consider it to be the appropriate forum for the negotiation of binding instruments that will lead to total and global disarmament and, with that, a safer world for all humankind. With this goal in mind, Argentina will take part in the meetings of the aforementioned informal working group, showing the flexibility needed in order to preserve the only standing negotiating body in the sphere of disarmament. It is our understanding that the complexity of the present situation stems from a deterioration in the negotiating environment that has occurred over time; the discussion proposed by the General Assembly thus continues to be relevant. We would like to express our thanks to and full confidence in Ambassador Gallegos of Ecuador and Ambassador Woolcott of Australia for the role they will take within the group and assure them of our full cooperation in pursuing that mandate.

We have followed closely the ideas expressed in this forum regarding the points made by the Secretary-General last June, as well as the reflections contained in the concept paper you have prepared, Mr. President. It seems to me that a number of the ideas suggested in your paper could lead to tangible steps towards resuming the work of the Conference. The proposals on extending the term of presidency, formulating more flexible programmes of work and expanding the membership to include States that have expressed an interest in participating in our work would go a long way towards revitalizing the Conference's working environment. Another important step in that direction would be to take a fresh look at ways for civil society's views to be shared, thus enriching the process.

Argentina remains fully convinced that the objectives set at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament have lost none of their relevance. We stand ready to renew our commitment in the hope that, through the efforts of the newly established group, the Conference will break its current stalemate and launch negotiations on the priority matters on its agenda without further delay. In this regard, Mr. President, you may count on the cooperation and readiness of my country to ensure that the meetings of the Conference cease to be solely a forum for reflection and instead produce changes that lead to a true negotiation process as they did so successfully in the past.

The President: I thank the representative of Argentina for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now recognize the delegate from Germany.

Mr. Böhm (Germany): Mr. President, let me take this occasion to thank you again wholeheartedly for the efforts you are making and the work you are putting into this very important task. We are looking forward to very intense cooperation with our friends and partners. The work we are doing here is substantial and important in many aspects.

We are grateful for your draft and would like to make just a few observations. The text is quite close to last year's report, which was only accepted, as you will remember, after lengthy negotiations. Let us hope that we can adopt this year's draft quite speedily.

I would like to make a few remarks on the substance of the draft.

The report reflects the message of the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, which was delivered to the Conference on Disarmament by the Secretary-

General of the Conference, Mr. Tokayev, on 22 January 2013. In this message, he called for an end to the continued stalemate concerning the adoption of a programme of work in order to avoid jeopardizing the credibility of the Conference. We have to acknowledge that not very much has happened in this regard.

The report reflects as well that there have been a number of substantive efforts to find consensus on a programme of work. In our view, the proposals made by the Hungarian and Iraqi presidencies could and should have commanded consensus, if indeed there had been the political will for the early commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material.

The situation of the continued stalemate as reflected in the present text could, I feel, increase the calls for negotiations of that kind to take place elsewhere.

But not only these negotiations need to be considered. Other nuclear-related core issues are blocked as well. Therefore, we have great hope that the one concrete outcome of this year's session of the Conference — the decision on the forming of an informal working group with a mandate to produce a programme of work — will produce tangible results quite soon. We expect that the informal working group will change the dynamics of the negotiations and it will facilitate consensus.

Nonetheless, we have to be realistic: this will take some time. Policy differences that have blocked the Conference up to now will have to be overcome, and I am sure this will be reflected in the report at a later stage.

The President: I thank the representative of Germany for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

I see no more speakers on the list. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? I recognize the delegate from the United States of America.

Mr. Buck (United States of America): Mr. President, allow my delegation also to thank you and your team for all the very hard work that you have clearly put into the preparation of this first draft. We also are very mindful of the delicate balance you have sought to strike in preparing this document, and look forward to engaging with you and the other delegations. I hope we can bring this to a speedy and successful conclusion. We find the draft an appropriate basis for work. We may have some written comments to submit, but at this point, in the spirit of this discussion, I just wanted to make one general observation, perhaps picking up on the comment of my German colleague regarding the credibility of the Conference on Disarmament and particularly with reference to the citation of the Secretary-General.

I think our reading of that passage would be that the credibility of the Conference is not limited to whether it produces a programme of work, but to whether it produces the primary output for which it is constituted, which is multilateral negotiations, and, for us in particular, a fissile material cut-off treaty.

I just wanted to put that out there for the room's consideration: as we view and consider the Secretary-General's statements — again, in our view — the credibility of the Conference is not limited specifically to the issue of a programme of work but actually to the output of work.

The President: I thank the representative of the United States of America for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I recognize the Ambassador of the Netherlands.

Mr. Van der Kwast (Netherlands): Mr. President, since this is the first time I am taking the floor under your presidency, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency and assure you of our full support.

You have asked us today to comment on the draft Conference on Disarmament report that you have presented to us and for which we wish to thank you.

As we look back over the year, we regret that we must conclude that, as an international community, we were still unable to find a way out of the impasse in the disarmament machinery that has now lasted well over 15 years. For us, it is a fact that the Conference once again has lost a year in that we did no substantial work, that is, discussing and negotiating disarmament treaties. We are concerned about another year of failure to make progress and, above all, about the image this body thereby creates in the United Nations and, even more so, in the outside world. So far, this room has been more impressive than what comes out of it. It is even more worrying when we realize that this year four serious attempts were made by various presidencies — and we thank those presidencies for their work — to produce a programme of work, of which three became Conference documents and one was tabled for adoption but subsequently rejected. The language used in some of those documents was far beyond the comfort zone of many delegations, including mine. If we cannot reach a consensus about discussing core issues, one really starts to wonder where we can find an agreement, and if agreement is possible at all at this moment in time. I would agree with the delegation that just said that it is not just about a programme of work, but it is also about multilateral negotiations. Multilateral discussions in this body are, for us, highly valued.

We, therefore, wish to thank the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Tokayev, for his proposals to revitalize the Conference, and we are very pleased that under the Iraqi presidency we were able to adopt the decision contained in document CD/1956/Rev.1.

The start of the informal working group does not mean we are at the end of the deadlock, but at least it provides us with the possibility to search for or negotiate a common way out.

Mr. President, we see all these elements clearly reflected in the report. We think you did an excellent job and stand ready to adopt the report as it is, and we are in favour of the various ideas you produced in it.

We are all engaged, through the informal working group, in producing a programme of work. Instead of long and difficult negotiations on the report, we are convinced that we would better spend our energy and time coming up with constructive ideas to get us out of the deadlock in the Conference. In this regard, I would like to say that we are very grateful to the Ambassadors of Ecuador and Australia for having agreed to take on the difficult task of leading the informal working group.

The President: I thank the representative of the Netherlands for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the Chair. I now recognize the representative of Poland.

Mr. Lusiński (Poland): Mr. President, as this is the first time I am taking the floor during your presidency, allow me to congratulate you on the assumption of this function and assure you of my delegation's sincere and constant support.

Mr. President, we are grateful for the work done by you on the draft report, which appropriately captures the efforts of the session, including the much appreciated initiative of our Secretary-General, Mr. Tokayev.

The final deliberations will, however, be conducted without me because I will conclude my assignment in Geneva in a few days. The good news on behalf of Poland is that I will be replaced as head of the Polish delegation by Mr. Wojciech Flera, my

country's long-standing director for disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control affairs.

Since I will also leave the field of disarmament and non-proliferation to return to the field of European integration, let me wish all of you a successful recovery of the Conference on Disarmament and negotiation of a treaty that will foster the goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

The President: I thank the representative of Poland for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now recognize the delegate from Algeria.

Mr. Khelif (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): The Algerian delegation, as well, wishes to extend a warm welcome to the participants in the United Nations Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament for 2013.

We also thank you, Mr. President, for the draft report you have submitted to us on the work of the Conference at its 2013 session. It is a very solid starting point for preparing a report which presents an accurate review of the session's activities, as required under the rules of procedure. The Algerian delegation intends to be an active participant in all subsequent discussions on this matter and assures you of its support.

We are for the most part in agreement with the content of the draft report. We would like to mention, however, that the Algerian delegation had expressed the wish at this session that the open-ended working group responsible for developing proposals to take forward the multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, established by General Assembly resolution 67/56 of 3 December 2012, might contribute to the work of the Conference in order to resume and revitalize the multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. In this respect, we would request that the final wording used in our report make reference to the work of this group.

The President: I thank the representative of Algeria for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now recognize the delegate from Iran.

Mr. Daryaei (Islamic Republic of Iran): Allow me to begin by warmly welcoming the participants in the 2013 United Nations Programme of Fellowship on Disarmament. Sixteen years ago, I was sitting in the same seat watching the Conference on Disarmament discussions. The Disarmament Fellowship Programme is a very important training course and can contribute significantly to education and training in the field of disarmament, which nowadays is very important.

Mr. President, allow me to thank you for providing the draft of the Conference's annual report. As you rightly mentioned, it is a factual report, and I think the report should be factual. Based on the rules of procedure, it should be a factual document which reflects the work within the Conference.

To be sure, the discussions of the last year in the Conference on Disarmament contained major elements which should be reflected in a balanced manner. We are glad that you have tried to be consistent with past adopted language; that is very important. In some parts, however, I think we need further refinement to reflect what has been done in the Conference in a balanced manner. It is important for us that we avoid giving a negative message about the work of the Conference. Despite the deadlock, many Presidents during 2013 did their best to bridge the gap and bring delegations closer. This is the first year that we tabled three programmes of work: we have on the table three programmes of work for adoption. I think that shows that all the delegations and Presidents have worked hard, and I think it should be mentioned in the report.

We may have some written comments that we will provide later on. As a general point, we have to be mindful of the Conference's credibility in how we refer to the

deadlock in paragraphs 5 and 25. We will see later whether there would be a need for further refinement.

The President: I thank the representative of Iran for his statement. I now recognize the Ambassador of Canada.

Ms. Golberg (Canada): Mr. President, I had not planned to take the floor, but I thought that it was appropriate at this time to make a brief comment with respect to the draft report. My delegation would like to thank you for having prepared the report. You have been appropriately guided by rule 45, which seeks to establish a factual account of what has occurred, and we think that you have also appropriately drawn on last year's report as a basis for trying to ensure that we move as expeditiously as possible in trying to achieve a consensus on the draft.

I would simply note for the record that, while we certainly appreciate all of the work that has been done by consecutive Presidents who have put forward to the Conference on Disarmament draft programmes of work over the course of the year, this commitment on their part to try to get the Conference to re-establish itself as an organization that undertakes substantive negotiation is not, in the end, substantive negotiation. And so, without disrespecting the efforts of those Presidents, which were extraordinary, we have to agree that a commitment to try to get a programme of work is not an actual commitment to getting negotiations to begin. That is something that the Secretary-General underscored in January 2003 when he urged us to revive substantive negotiations, and something that has been picked up on by other speakers who have addressed the Conference over the course of the year.

Nevertheless, we are confident that under your able leadership we will be able to achieve a satisfactory outcome on the report, but would certainly be cautious from our part on trying to include any language in the report that somehow suggests that the Conference has in fact been able to pursue any substantive outcomes this year.

The President: I thank the representative of Canada for her statement and I now recognize the delegate from Cuba.

Mr. Romero Puentes (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first time that I am taking the floor under your presidency, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, and acknowledge the efficient way in which you are conducting your presidency.

Mr. President, my delegation, like others, considers that the draft report you have submitted constitutes a solid basis for the negotiations we will conduct over the coming days and weeks. Undoubtedly, one of the strong points of the report is its accurate reflection of the Conference's work during 2013. Furthermore, it uses wording that was agreed last year following intense and very complicated negotiations on the report, which we all remember quite well.

We wish to point out, however, that paragraphs 5 and 25 of the draft report are not consistent with the text we approved last year. This is logical in that those paragraphs, especially paragraph 5, refer mainly to the Secretary-General's message, which is new and different from the message he delivered last year. My delegation nonetheless feels that we need to amend the wording used in these two paragraphs. The Cuban delegation will revert back to you, Mr. President, with proposals we consider appropriate and also wishes to give other States the opportunity to respond. We reserve the right to respond as and when new proposed wordings are tabled during the negotiation of the report.

The President: I thank the representative of Cuba for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

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I see no other speakers on the list. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? I recognize the delegate from Iran.

Mr. Daryaei (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am sorry to take the floor again, but it is a question that I was waiting on because I wanted to ask it of the secretariat. It is about the practice of the Conference on Disarmament in reflecting decisions. Shall we reproduce the whole decision in the final report, or would it suffice to mention just the symbol? I am referring to paragraph 18. It would be appreciated if the secretariat could clarify that.

The President: Before replying, I will first give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. Yoo Yeonchul (Republic of Korea): As a neighbour of Poland in this chamber, I would like to say that we have appreciated the contributions Poland has made to date, and we wish you every success and good luck.

With regard to the annual report, I would like to express my appreciation to the President for this draft. Comments will be submitted later on, but our general observation is that, as our German colleague pointed out, as this draft report is quite close to last year's, there will be no problem in general in adopting this report as speedily as possible. It is my hope that under your able leadership the Conference will reach a consensus on an objective and accurate report expeditiously.

The President: I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

If I might, and as I see no other speakers, I would first reply briefly to the representative of Iran.

On this issue, as a responsibility of the presidency in preparing the annual report, we have looked at previous annual reports and there are precedents for giving the entire text of the decision by the Conference, particularly where there are procedural or other issues involved. It is an issue that we can, of course, look at when we return to examining the text next week in detail, but as President I would only say, having looked at previous years' reports, there is indeed a very real precedent for giving the full text of a decision, particularly one with implications in terms of the programme of work.

I do not know if the secretariat would like to add anything to that.

I see no other speakers on my list. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? I see none.

I consider our consideration of the annual report today in general terms has been substantive and helpful in moving forward to an early conclusion of this work.

This concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on next Tuesday, 3 September 2013, at 10 a.m., and will focus on consideration and adoption of the annual report to the General Assembly of the United Nations. We will proceed, having received the written amendments by Friday, to a paragraph-by-paragraph reading of the report; if necessary, we will then set aside two or three days for informal consultations outside this chamber.

The first part of next week's meeting will be in plenary, and we will then move into informal mode to allow full consideration of the draft annual report.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.